

Rome Re-Imagined

Byzantine and Early Islamic Africa, ca. 500–800

DUMBARTON OAKS SYMPOSIUM, 27–29 APRIL 2012
SYMPOSIARCHS: SUSAN T. STEVENS AND JONATHAN P. CONANT

The short period of Byzantine rule in the Maghreb belies the region's importance to the empire in the sixth and seventh centuries. Given the profound economic and strategic significance of the province of "Africa," the territory was also highly contested in the Byzantine period—by the empire itself, Berber kingdoms, and eventually also Muslim Arabs—as each of these groups sought to gain, retain control of, and exploit the region to its own advantage. In light of this charged history, scholars have typically taken the failure of the Byzantine endeavor in Africa as a foregone conclusion. This symposium sought to reassess this pessimistic vision both by examining those elements of Romano-African identity that provided continuity

in a period of remarkable transition, and by seeking to understand the transformations in African society in the context of developments in the larger post-Roman Mediterranean. An international group of researchers from North America, Europe, and North Africa, including both well-established and emerging scholars, addressed topics including the legacy of Vandal rule in Africa, historiography and literature, art and architectural history, the archaeology of cities and their rural hinterlands, the economy, the family, theology, the cult of saints, Berbers, and the Islamic conquest, in an effort to consider the ways in which the imperial legacy was re-interpreted, re-imagined, and put to new uses in Byzantine and early Islamic Africa.

FRIDAY, 27 APRIL

Introduction

Susan T. Stevens · Randolph College and
Jonathan P. Conant · Brown University

Prokopios's Vandal War: Thematic Trajectories and Hidden Transcripts

Anthony Kaldellis · The Ohio State University

Gelimer's Slaughter: The Case for Late Vandal Africa

Andy Merrills · University of Leicester

The Garamantian Diaspora and the Southern Frontiers of Byzantine North Africa

Elizabeth Fentress · University College London
Andrew Wilson · University of Oxford

Campaigns and Conquests in Context: Reconsiderations

Walter Kaegi · University of Chicago

Revisiting Byzantine Africa: Historical Geography through Medieval Arab Sources

Mohamed Benabbès · Université de Tunis

The Literature of Vandal and Byzantine Africa: Something Old, Something New?

Gregory Hays · University of Virginia

SATURDAY, 28 APRIL

Beyond Spolia: Architectural Memory and Adaptation in the Churches of Late Antique North Africa

Ann Marie Yasin · University of Southern California

The Family in Byzantine Africa

Kate Cooper · The University of Manchester

From Byzantine Africa to Arab Ifriqiya:

Tracing Ceramic Trends through the Seventh to Eleventh Centuries

Paul Reynolds · University of Barcelona

A Byzantine Afterlife at Carthage

Susan T. Stevens · Randolph College

The Transformation of North African Land- and Cityscapes in the Byzantine and Early Arab Period

Philipp von Rummel · Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, Rome

“Regio dives in omnibus bonis ornata”: African Economy and Society from the Vandals to the Arab Conquest in the Light of Coin Evidence

Cécile Morrisson · CNRS, Dumbarton Oaks

SUNDAY, 29 APRIL

Exegesis and Dissent in Byzantine North Africa

Leslie Dossey · Loyola University, Chicago

Sanctity and the Networks of Empire in Byzantine North Africa

Jonathan P. Conant · Brown University

Concluding Remarks

Peter Brown · Princeton University



The exhibition “From Clearing to Cataloging: The Corpus of Tunisian Mosaics,” April–June 2012, featuring archival materials from the Margaret Alexander Collection (MS.BZ.001) in the Image Collections and Fieldwork Archives (ICFA) of Dumbarton Oaks, was arranged by Rona Razon and Robin Pokorski to coincide with the symposium.